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The Gull

CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter
Volume 78 • No.2 February 1996

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of the GGNRA
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The following was sent to us by member John Gibson who describes the author as "a young astronomer who is a friend of my son." We thought it a wonderful description of a winter day in the Sacramento Valley.

I picked up my friend Lita Sunday morning (December 3, 1995) in Sacramento and we headed north on I-5. Our destination was the Sacramento Valley National Wildlife Refuge system of marshes, wetlands, old rice paddies and permanent ponds in the north-central Sacramento Valley. Just before Woodland, we got off the interstate and onto a tiny country road called Cranmore that followed the Sacramento River for 40 miles, mostly up on levees. The sinuous road adhered to the oxbows, only occasionally short-cutting them with straight-aways and right-angle turns so common in farm country. The riverbanks were lined with tall cottonwoods, half-bare with yellow-green leaves, and thick tropical-looking vines that climbed nearly into their crowns. Many birds of prey and magpies were perched on the power poles and bare oak trees along the road. Later in the year, when all the trees are bare, every black lump one sees in a tree is a hawk. The Central Valley is a great place to see kites, falcons and hawks in winter. At a very lonely crossroad, we spotted a grave under a large oak tree surrounded by a foot-high iron fence. The headstone was a white obelisk about two feet high with inscriptions on both sides. Two children aged one and six from different families were buried there in 1867. I imagine very little has changed at this spot in the 130 years they have lain there.

About six feet from the grave we noticed the body of a small Red-tailed Hawk. It lay belly down in a circle of oak

leaves, its gorgeous wings and tail spread out in an elegant and completely unmorbid display. The animal was in perfect condition, retaining all its primaries and tail feathers, and showing no sign of trauma (i.e., insect, vulture, gunshot). The body was neither warm or cold, just lifeless. After much deliberation, we decided to take one tail feather (which is illegal). As I tugged at a feather in the middle of the tail, the rest spread out into the perfect fan that makes these raptors so beautiful. This vision so moved us that we instantly decided to let it be and continued our journey.

The narrow road veered away from the river for several miles of arrow-straight, high-speed cruising. Descending clouds reduced visibility to just a few miles; a storm was on its way. Directly ahead of us appeared the faintest of darkening in the clouds. I then remembered we were near the Sutter Buttes, but their rounded summits seemed more like ghost ships in an ocean of clouds than the ghost of a volcano in a sea of fields. Farther along the river, we passed an old cemetery on the outskirts of Meridian, one of the small Central Valley towns that was left behind in a previous era (looked like the late 1940's). In the nearby fields, billows of smoke rose and headed north from several agricultural fires, making the already-hazy sky murkier. Every few minutes, we would see a small grouping of geese fly overhead, so we knew we were getting close to our goal. The previous two hours of rural driving were exactly what we expected (and sought), so we were rather surprised to pass a huge, newly-paved parking lot filled with cars and buses. Somewhere we read the word "casino," commented on the fact that casinos aren't allowed in California, then made a joke about Indian reservations, and promptly let it all pass from our minds. Later, I looked at

the map and saw a tiny yellow patch marked "Colusa Indian Reservation." The casino parking lot probably covers half of it!

The refuge visitor center is small, but filled with lots of stuffed birds. It was nice to see up close many of the birds that we saw from the car, and to get a good look at the different geese and ducks we hoped to see in the next few hours. As we started the auto loop tour, it began to rain lightly. We passed various habitats along the road and stopped at most of them. Northern Harriers and kestrels hunted over the grasslands, while White Pelicans, herons, grebes, and coots poked and paddled about the ponds. But these birds were outnumbered thousands to one by the migratory waterfowl. The Central Valley is a major wintering ground along the Pacific Flyway. Geese, swans, and ducks from the Siberian, Alaskan, and Canadian arctic fly thousands of miles every year to spend the winter in California. Approximately 4 million ducks and 500,000 geese are believed to inhabit the five small refuges in the Central Valley (and these numbers represent only 5% of the pre-gold-rush populations).

We parked near a pool containing 500 or so Snow Geese, Canada Geese, and White-fronted Geese, and ate lunch. Everywhere around us were flying groups of geese; small flocks of six to a dozen, larger squadrons of 50 to 200 arranged in "V" formations. Several times that afternoon, huge groups of Snow Geese would simultaneously take off from their pools, forming seething swarms of honking black and white. Although impossible to count, these super groups were easily ten times larger than the squadrons of 200 (which are countable). This activity continued all afternoon peaking at dusk. At any given moment, one to two dozen groups could be seen flying in all directions.

At 5:30, it became difficult to see. We had had our fill of at least 50,000 birds and were quite happy to leave. A mile down the road, we passed an empty car, its owners frantically pointing at the sky. "They must have seen a bird," I joked. However, something made me

stop and look out the window. The sky was black with birds! We had been seeing geese all day long, but now the more numerous ducks had taken wing. They were flying everywhere at every elevation. The scene was more reminiscent of mosquitoes in the Everglades or bats at Carlsbad Caverns. I had been told that the birds tend to fly only twice per day, once in the morning to their feeding grounds, and once again in the evening to their roosting pools (to minimize their exposure to hunters). But to actually witness the sky turning dark from their silhouettes, and to hear the cacophony of honking, quacking, and wing-beats is beyond description. 100,000 birds in a day is probably a gross underestimate.

Back in the car, the birds were imperceptible, even with the headlights out. Drivers on I-5, just a mile away, were witness to none of the spectacle. We headed back to Sacramento via Woodland, stopping at Granzella's Olive Factory in Williams, the best watering hole between Winters and Willows.

Martin Sirk

Waterfowl Classes

**Classes: Tues., Feb. 13 and 20, 7-9pm
Field Trip: Saturday, Feb. 24, 8am-2pm**

Dan Murphy will teach a brief class focusing on field identification and habitats of waterfowl which winter in San Francisco Bay. We will use slides and lectures to build field identification skills which we will practice when visiting several west bay sites on the field trip. Class is sponsored by and held at the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park. GGAS members may register at the CAS members' cost of \$50. To register by mail, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Adult Education, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, S.F., CA 94118. Include name, address with zip, day and evening phone numbers and title of the class. Be sure to mention your Academy or Audubon Society membership to qualify for the discount.

Birding Classes in SF

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan will be starting February 13, 14 and 15. All classes meet 7-9:15 p.m. in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. There's free parking in the school lot off Bay St.

The instructor is co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and coordinator of the Northern California BirdBox, sponsored by GGAS. Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text for all classes is *A Field Guide to Birds of North America*, second edition, by the National Geographic Society.

Field Ornithology I (Tuesdays) is an introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology and behavior. Part A: February 13 to March 26; Part B: April 9 to May 21.

Field Ornithology II (Wednesdays) is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American land birds, including swifts, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, and flycatchers. Part A: February 14 to March 27; Part B: April 10 to May 22.

Field Ornithology III (Thursdays) is a continuing study of water birds including waterfowl, rails, and shorebirds. Part A: February 15 to March 28; Part B: April 11 to May 23.

These classes are endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon. Optional field trips on weekends may be arranged by the instructor. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them.

Fees are \$75 for each seven-week course. Pre-registration is recommended. For information, call S. F. City College Continuing Education Office at (415) 561-1840 or (415) 267-6545.

ACR Hosts

Spring is nearly upon us and Audubon Canyon Ranch with its nesting herons and egrets will be open soon. Volunteer hosts to greet visitors are needed for the following weekends: March 16-17; April 13-14; May 11-12; June 8-9; and July 6 and 13. Call the GGAS office at (510) 843-2222 to sign up.

Back Yard Birder

Meg Pauletich

For over 20 years I have joined thousands of bird watchers in counting birds for the annual Christmas Count. Back in the early 70's, my son Mike and I covered a small area in our neighborhood just for the fun of it. Later I was asked to join in a more organized effort under the leadership of Nancy Conzett. It was the beginning of a fine friendship and she "hired" me to write this column when she was editor of *The Gull*. When Nancy decided to count a new area, I inherited our part of Orinda as leader. Some might think it would get boring, but there are always surprises and we know where to look for certain species, although they don't always show up on command. For the past 10 years or so, it has been the same diehard group of us, so we do a great deal of reminiscing as we count.

One year we were the only group to find Acorn Woodpeckers. This kind of information is valuable in tracking waning bird populations. It was speculated that the influx of starlings contributed to the decline of nesting sites for both the Acorns and Western Bluebirds. Both seem to be rebounding now. Also

interesting were the oddities spotted during the drought everywhere. For us, those were mainly birds congregating around Lake Cascade: both Snowy and Great egrets (Great Blue Herons are common), snipe, Greater Yellowlegs, Gadwall, Canvasbacks and mergansers.

This year we were shocked to spot a large flock of Brown Pelicans FLAP, FLAP, FLAP, then GLIDING across our site with their sights set on San Pablo Reservoir and the bay beyond. Two coyotes gave us a thrill as they stared at us from the safety of the E. Bay M.U.D. property. We can never get enough of the gorgeous Wood Ducks we find on a local pond. Brown Creepers are always chancey finds, but this year 2 of them entertained us close at hand along with a flock of busy Golden-crowned Kinglets. As we were trying to zoom in on a Nuttall's Woodpecker, a Cooper's Hawk nearly picked it off an oak limb just overhead. The hawk was as surprised as we!

Every new species we add is a treat -- we're now up to 91 species collected over the years. Last year we added Osprey: we

feasted our eyes on him as he feasted on a fish while perched on a power tower. A Say's Phoebe caused a lot of discussion -- some insisted it was merely a robin, while a few noted its more erect posture and its fly-catching behavior. Some of the American Goldfinches this year were still as brightly-colored as in summertime. They hung from the bare birch branches like sunny ornaments on a Christmas tree. A Great Blue Heron landed atop an oak tree at the lake, the branch breaking beneath him, startling the flock of sunbathing Double-crested Cormorants. Unforgettable was the frosty morning we stared skyward to glimpse a flock of Tundra Swans, gleaming white against the bright blue. That will forever be etched in our memories.

Birders need no excuses to go birding, but I, for one, wouldn't miss a Christmas Count. The day has all the elements for fun: mystery (what will we find?); humor (both bird and human); lots of plodding (those times between "hot spots"); excitement (a new species for our list); and the unusual looks we get from non-birders. Try it!



Call 1-800-COAST-4 U to order the California Coastal Protection License Plate from the California Coastal Commission

Observations: December, 1995

Hugh Cotter

LOONS TO DUCKS

Two **Yellow-Billed Loons** reported on Monterey Bay during the second week of December were presumably the same individuals seen on a Monterey Bay pelagic, Dec. 29, during the Christmas Bird Count, (DLSh).

Point Arena, MEN, again played host to a Laysan Albatross during the month with the return of what must surely be the same bird which wintered there last year. The bird, first seen on Dec. 6 (GD), continues to be seen regularly close to shore at Arena Cove.

This has been an excellent year for Flesh-footed Shearwaters with reports continuing into December. A single bird was seen early in the month on Monterey Bay, MTY, with a total of 6 recorded there an Dec. 29 (DLSh). Large concentrations of Northern Fulmar continued to be seen offshore during the period, from Monterey to Mendocino counties, while coastal seawatching also produced small numbers of Short-tailed, Black-vented and Sooty shearwaters offshore (MOb).

The first Tufted Duck, of the winter, an adult male, was found at the Sunnyvale Sewer Ponds, SCL, on Dec. 16, (NLe). This bird was joined towards the end of the month by another male and both remained through Dec. 31 (MM). Single Harlequin Duck sightings came from Monterey; Pigeon Point, SM; and, interestingly, one at Brooks Island, CC, during the month. Eurasian Wigeon proved quite scarce with only eight birds reported. Good numbers of Oldsquaws, however, were seen from many coastal and San Francisco Bay locations while Lake Merritt in Oakland continued to play host to many Barrow's Goldeneye throughout the month.

RAPTORS TO GULLS

Rough-legged Hawk reports proved scarce with only two reports.

The only Rock Sandpiper for the month, and indeed so far reported this winter to date, was of two birds at the

North Jetty of Humboldt Bay, HUM, Dec. 27 (RR).

A Pacific Golden Plover was at the Woodland Sewer Ponds, YOL, Dec. 12 (StH). A good concentration of Mountain Plovers was found towards the end of the month north of Davis, YOL. The highest number recorded was approximately 150 birds in the ploughed fields there (GF).

The severe storm which passed over Northern California on Dec. 12 produced exceptional numbers of Red Phalaropes all along the coast during the following week. As the month progressed numbers dropped substantially, but some remained at many locations allowing some CBC's to find their first records of this species on the day.

The adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was last seen on Dec. 17 at the Alviso Salt Ponds, SCL (MOb). Only three reports of single Glaucous Gulls and two of single Black-legged Kittiwakes came from coastal locations during the month. Ancient Murrelets were present in good numbers along the coast with up to 200 seen in Point Arena Cove, MEN, at one stage.

SAPSUCKERS TO KINGBIRDS

A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker continued to be seen at Ed Levin County Park, SCL. Another was reported near Panoche Pass Road, SBT, on Dec. 22 (JS), while another single bird was seen at San Gregorio, SM, on Dec. 24, (RSTh). A single report of Red-naped Sapsucker came from Olema, MRN, on Dec. 16, (RS). Always a good find during the winter, a "Western" Flycatcher was seen on the Willow Creek (HUM) CBC, Dec. 23, while a Pacific-slope Flycatcher was seen on the Monterey CBC, Dec. 28. The Eastern Phoebe was last reported at Bodega Bay, SON, on Dec. 3. Other unusual flycatchers were some of the surprises found on CBC's this month. A **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** turned up in San Francisco on Dec. 27, (ADeM, DLSh). This is the second time this species has been seen on

this particular CBC and the bird remains at Fort Funston, SF. A **Vermilion Flycatcher** turned up on the Centerville CBC, HUM, on Dec. 30 (JH), with a Tropical Kingbird also seen in the same area that day.

VIREOS TO FINCHES

Christmas counts turned up good numbers of Solitary Vireos, most of them of the western form. Numbers of wintering warblers included 1 Tennessee, 3 Yellow, 3 Nashville, 7 Black-throated Gray, 14 Hermit, upwards of 22 Palm, 7 Black-and-White, 2 American Redstarts, and 6 Wilson Warblers reported. Other noteworthy warblers included continuing Lucy's Warblers: at Half Moon Bay, SM, last reported Dec. 18, (MOb); at Ferndale, HUM, through Dec. 22; and another found on the Crystal Springs CBC, SM, on Dec. 16, (AL). A McGillivray's Warbler was seen on the San Francisco CBC, Dec 27. The **Worm-eating Warbler** in Golden Gate Park, SF, remained through Dec. 23, (MOb), while the male **Hooded Warbler** at Mallard Lake, GGP, SF, still continues to be seen. Another **Hooded Warbler** was recorded during the Monterey CBC on Dec. 29 (SR), which also had a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at the Carmel River mouth the same day. A single Northern Waterthrush turned up during the Point Reyes CBC, Dec. 16, (RS).

A returning female Summer Tanager was seen throughout the month in Palo Alto, SCL, after first being seen on Dec. 2, (AME). Another female was seen at Pebble Beach, MTY, on Dec. 29, (SR). A total of 6 Western Tanagers were found at various locations. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak turned up at a feeder in Novato, MRN, on Dec. 6 (MW), while another was seen in Pacifica, SM, on Dec. 15 (LC).

An American Tree Sparrow found Dec. 16 at Arcata, HUM, (fide JCS) remained through the end of the month. Up to 4 Lark Buntings continued to be

seen at Panoche Valley, FRE/ SBT, (MOB), with two additional birds seen along Patterson Pass Road, ALA, on Dec. 31, (CL).

Three separate Harris's Sparrows were found during the month: at Arcata, HUM, on Dec. 16 (fide JCS); at MacArthur, SHA, on Dec. 16, (BY); and in San Francisco, Dec. 27 (fide DM). Two Chestnut-collared Longspurs were seen at the summit of Sierra Road, SCL, on Dec. 17 (MMR).

Highlight of the month, and a very fitting way to end the year, was the discovery of a **Rustic Bunting** near Hoopa, HUM, on Dec. 23., (DF, MOB) during the Willow Creek CBC. The bird, an adult winter male, continues to be seen. This species is an exceptional rarity in California, with only 4 previous sightings, several of them 1-day wonders. Its normal wintering grounds are in China and Japan with its breeding grounds being in Northern Eurasia.

Incredibly four Snow Buntings were seen on Dec. 30, during the Centerville CBC (JH). Four single Northern Orioles were reported from various locations, with a Hooded Oriole seen on Dec. 19 (JMR), coming to a feeder in Alamo, CC. Yet another CBC find was a Rusty Blackbird seen during the Centerville CBC on Dec. 30 (fide JH). Finally, the only report of Evening Grosbeak was of 3 birds at El Grenada, SM, on Dec. 23, (BS).

The monthly observation column is generated from reports made to the Northern California Bird Box or to the author. Some sightings are unconfirmed and numbers of birds are often best regarded as estimates or "best guesses". In general, birds in boldface are very rare in our region, geographically or seasonally. Many of these are currently reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Observers are encouraged to provide written and/or photographic documentation to the CBRC, c/o Michael Patten, P.O. Box 51959, Riverside, CA 92517-2959 for any species currently on the review list. A list of review species can also be obtained from the CBRC secretary at the address above.

OBSERVERS: Bruce Barrett, Florence G. Bennett, Andrew Birch, Marilyn Chilcoat, Rich Cimino, Luke Cole, Chris Corbin, Al DeMartini, Hugh Dingle, Todd Easterla, Alan M. Eisner, Mike Feighner, George Finger, David Fix, Steve Glover, Edward G. Greaves, Steve Hampton, Gary Hanour, Hugh Harvey, Sean

Hayes, Mike Healy, Bob Hirt, Alan S. Hopkins, Joel Hornstein, Richard Hoyer, Lisa Hug, John Hunter, Nick Lethaby, Cindy Lieurance, Leslie Lieurance, Mike Mammoser, Jennifer Matkin, Sean McAllister, Bert McKee, Dave McKenzie, Kevin McKerrigan, Peter Metropolis, Steve Metz, Carol Miller, Mike Moran, Joseph Morlan, Dan P. Murphy, Dan Nelson, David Nelson, Todd Newberry, Bill Nobil, John Osner, Benjamin D Parmeter, Linda Petrulias, Majorie Plant, David Powell, David Quaddy, Bob Reiling, Jean M. Richmond, Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn, Steve Rovell, Ruth Rudesill, Paul Sarassini, Barry Sauppe, Don Schmoldt, Debra L. Shearwater, Daniel Singer, Rich Stallecup, John Sterling, Tim Steuer, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorn, Dorothy Tobkin, Richard Turnillo, Steve Walsh, David Wimpfheimer, Adam Winer, Michael Wolf, Bob Yutzy
Data thanks to Joe Morlan and the Northern California Bird Box.

Abbreviations for counties; ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; FRE, Fresno; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; SF, San Francisco; SHA, Shasta; SBT, San Benito; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SON, Sonoma; YOL, Yolo.

Panama Committee News

Members of GGAS who traveled to Panama in November have returned with new enthusiasm for planning future projects with la Sociedad Audubon de Panama after our wonderful birding experiences there. The March issue of *The Gull* will provide more details about our trip, so watch for that article.

Some of the outreach activities committee members will be working on in the near future are:

Binocular and Scope Donations Program-Several sets of binoculars, were happily received by our friends in Panama Audubon last year, and we look forward to expanding this valuable program in 1996. A repair person as generously volunteered to check over and repair, when possible, all donated items. We need volunteers in San Francisco and the East Bay willing to receive donated equipment.

April Birdathon-This fundraiser will be an enjoyable way to provide the Panama Committee with resources to cover expenses in support of Panama Audubon's extremely successful Annual International Bird Festival held in Panama City each fall.

1997 Panama Trip Planning-We are gearing up for the next trip to Panama for spring of 1997 and plan to expand

it to include more of this fascinating country and more bird species.

Educational Outreach Program-We envision developing support for curriculum programs to expand awareness of conservation in Panama classrooms and to possibly form partnerships with classrooms here.

Please join us to hear more about all of these exciting projects by attending one of our monthly meetings in the East Bay. The next two meetings of the Panama Committee will be Monday, February 12, and Monday March 11. Call chairman Miles McKey (510/652-5854) for time and location.

Corinne Stefanek

Duck Days

*Geese, Hawks, Cranes and Ducks
Gardening for Wildlife
Peter Steinhart
Decoy Carving
Birdwatching for Beginners
Waterfowl Cuisine
much much more*

California Duck Days
A Wetland Festival in the Heart of the Pacific Flyway

**February 16 - 19
Davis, CA**

Sponsored by the Yolo Basin Foundation and a host of other agencies and community organizations, Duck Days is a celebration of wildlife in the Central Valley of California. There will be field trips, workshops, performances, exhibit booths, and family and youth activities. Headquarters and registration: Veterans Memorial Center, 203 East 14th Street, Davis, (916) 758-1286 or (800) 425-5001. Cost: \$10 per day, \$25 for the entire festival, under 16 years - free.

SPRING SEED SALE

Our next bird-seed sale pick-up will take place on March 1 and 2, 1996. If you wish to order seed, please fill out the adjacent seed-order form and mail it to us with a check made out to GGAS, with a self-addressed stamped envelope. This should be received in the GGAS office by Thursday, February 22. Pick-up of seed will take place Friday, March 1, 3-6 PM and Saturday, March 2, 9 AM -1 PM at the Golden Gate Audubon Office in Berkeley.

We will have extra seed on hand so if you didn't order enough seed, or forgot to order any seed at all, come on down to the office. We'll have the seed you need!

Volkman seed is the best there is, it contains no waste seed and has been cleaned of debris and dust so you get what you pay for. If you have a question about which kind of seed to buy give us a call at the GGAS Office, 510-843-2222.

We're pleased to say that the prices for sunflower seed have come down appreciably.

The Duncraft Feeder is a 16" long tube seed-feeder, similar to the Droll Yankee feeder that we used to sell. The squirrel baffles for the Duncraft feeders have proved to be a success, so we're including them as a regular item on our order form. If the squirrels, cute as they might be, are out-competing the birds for the seed, you may want to try one of the squirrel baffles.

Remember, your purchases provide an important source of income to GGAS, allowing us to continue our conservation, education and field-trip activities. We look forward to seeing you on seed sale day.

We are proud to announce our new cap. It is a soft-crowned, brushed twill cap in natural colors with an adjustable cloth strap in back. This design is embroidered in 5 colors. →

We offer the GGAS cap in three color choices...

GGAS BIRD SEED AND FEEDER SALE

ORDER AND PREPAY BY FEBRUARY 22, 1996
PICK UP FRIDAY, MARCH 1, SATURDAY, MARCH 2

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Telephone (day) _____ (evening) _____

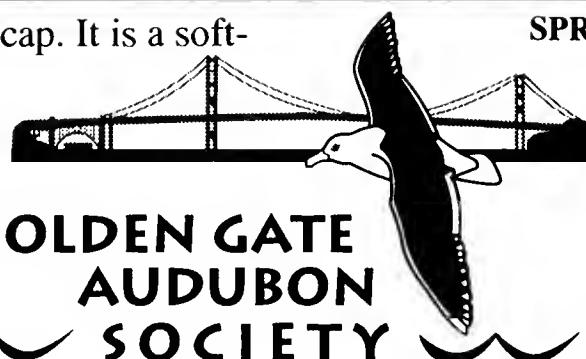
SEED	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
GGAS' OWN MIX <i>Contains only red and white millet and black oil sunflower seed</i>	20 lbs. 50 lbs.	\$10.50 \$21.00
VOLKMAN PREMIUM	20 lbs.	\$ 9.50
WILD BIRD SEED <i>Composed of only red and white millet -- no sunflower seeds (no squirrels)</i>	50 lbs.	\$18.00
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED	25 lbs. 50 lbs.	\$15.00 \$27.00
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER CHIPS <i>(No waste!)</i>	25 lbs.	\$26.00
NIGER (THISTLE) SEED	5 lbs.	\$10.75

FEEDERS	SUB-TOTAL
DUNCRAFT SEED FEEDER 16"	\$28.00
THISTLE FEEDER <i>(for goldfinches and siskins)</i>	\$10.00
HUMMINGBIRD (window)	\$10.00
ZINGER (saucer style) <i>(for hummingbirds)</i>	\$15.50
HUMMINGBIRD (16 oz. bottle)	\$12.00
SUET CAGE (2" x 5" x 5")	\$ 5.50
SUET CAKE (11.75 oz.)	\$ 2.75
FEEDER POLE (sectional)	\$16.00
SQUIRREL BAFFLE	\$24.00

Be sure to include
your check with a
stamped and self-
addressed envelope.

Pick up in Berkeley
at the GGAS office

SUB-TOTAL	8.25% SALES TAX
TOTAL	CONTRIBUTION TO GGAS
GRAND TOTAL	



SPRUCE / MOSS
(light top with dark visor)

MOSS / SPRUCE or SAGE / IVY
(dark top with light visor)

Available at the September Seed Sale for \$10.00 each including tax, or order by mail by sending a check to the GGAS office for \$10.00 plus \$2.50 postage & handling per cap.

Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, February 3

Lake Merced, San Francisco

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Ocean Beach parking lot by the intersection of Sloat Blvd. and Great Highway. This is a good time to see grebes and other wintering waterfowl. Lunch is optional for this half-day trip. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983.

Saturday, February 3

Panoche Valley

Meet it 8 am at the intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 In Paicenes, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. From there we will caravan east to I-5 south of Los Banos. Last year this raptor habitat produced Golden Eagles, Merlin and Prairie Falcons, plus Mountain Bluebirds, Phainopeplas, Vesper Sparrows and much more. Considering the distance involved in this trip, be sure to gas up prior to leaving Hollister, and carpool from the Bay Area if possible. Bring lunch and warm clothes. Rain cancels. Leader: Chris Carpenter (510) 569-9281 day, (510) 547-2201 eve.

Sunday, February 4

Lake Merritt, Oakland

Meet at 9 a.m. at Grand Ave. and El Embarcadero by the Greek Colonade. Bring binoculars, scope, and field guide if you have them. This is an excellent opportunity to observe wintering ducks and grebes at close range and to study their field identification. This trip is recommended for beginners and is wheelchair accessible. Trip ends at noon. Rain cancels. Leader: Joan Zawaski (415) 433-1700 (day), (510) 530-2427 (eve.)

Wednesday, February 14

Mini-trip to Coyote Hills Regional Park

Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot by the Visitors' Center at the end of the road. From the East Bay take 1-880 south to Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Turn right and continue west. Exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy.; turn right and continue north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow the signs to Coyote Hills. From San Francisco take Hwy. 101 south beyond Redwood City, cross the Dumbarton Bridge and exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy.; go north one mile to Patterson Ranch Rd. and follow signs to Coyote Hills.

We will be looking for three species of teal and other wintering waterfowl. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Rain cancels. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$ (*).

Saturday, February 17

Tilden Regional Park

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Nature Center parking lot for a half-day trip. Enter the park from either the Spruce Gate or the Shasta Gate off Grizzly Peak Blvd. in Berkeley, and follow signs to the Nature Center at north end of park. We will hike the trails of Jewel Lake, Nature Area, and Botanic Garden. Beginners welcome. Rain cancels. Leader: Nikhil Kumaranayagam (510) 704-8168. (*)

Wednesday, March 13

Mini-trip to Mitchell Canyon

We will meet at 9:30 a.m. Take Hwy 24 through the Caldecott Tunnel. At Walnut Creek take Ygnacio Valley Rd. exit. Go approximately 8 miles, then turn right onto Clayton Rd. Go one mile and make a right onto Mitchell Canyon Rd. and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road.

This a delightful area with easy steamside walking and many songbirds. Wear shoes suitable for walking in mud, and bring your lunch. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. (\$)

Saturday, March 16

San Francisco Bird Blitz

In this annual blitz we expect to tally over 100 different species within the city limits. This year's mad dash, hoping to exceed all previous records, will begin at 7 a.m. sharp. Meet at the north end of Van Ness Ave. past North Point, the last cross street, at the foot of Municipal Picr. From there we will caravan to other sites including Golden Gate Park, Sutro Baths, Lake Merced, and Candlestick Point. Bring lunch and liquids. We will bird until dusk, then adjourn to a nearby restaurant where we will recap the day's observations, and for a minimal cost we can avoid going home to cook dinner. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415)664-0983.

Sunday March 17

Briones Reservoir, EBMUD Watershed

Take Hwy. 24 east and exit on the Orinda turnoff. Turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right and drive about 4.25 miles to the Bear Creek staging area on the left, just beyond Happy Valley Rd. (If you see the Briones Regional Park entrance, you've gone too far. Go back .25 mi.) Or, from Berkeley area - cross through Tilden Regional Park on Wildcat Canyon Rd. and continue across San Pablo Dam Rd. onto Bear Creek Rd. 4.25 miles to the staging area.

We will be looking for wintering birds of the brushland, early migrants, and waterfowl. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 523-7108 (*).

Trips marked with * go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (*).

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chair. (510) 524-2399.

February Meeting: Bobcats and Grey Foxes

A Study of Carnivores of the GGNRA

Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley

Thursday, February 8, 1996, 7:30 p.m.

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area, comprising 75,000 acres of diverse wildlife habitats extending 25 miles north and south of the Golden Gate, is home to up to 11 carnivore species, including bobcat, mountain lion, grey fox, coyote, mink, badger, ringtail and raccoon. Community Ecology, a young but growing discipline, is studies the make-up and interactions of various biological communities. For a variety of reasons, there have been few community studies of larger mammals such as carnivores.

Research Scientist, Dr. Judd A. Howell, and Research Associate, Seth Riley, of the National Biological Service, who have used 250 volunteers over the last 6 years to record information about 40 vertebrate species at over 450 sample plots, are now embarking on an intense study of two common carnivore species, the bobcat and the grey fox, in two areas of the park. These two areas, one of which is ungrazed but adjacent to urban development and the other of which is grazed but more isolated, typify the land-use contradictions which exist within the park and the problems which result from encroaching urbanization. The effect this has on wildlife in general and larger mammals at the upper end of the food chain in particular will be studied in an effort to form guidelines for future National Park policy and land-use decisions.

Join Dr. Howell and Mr. Riley as they describe using radio telemetry to track individual bobcats and grey foxes, hoping to learn more about how these animals use the lands of the park as well as how they interact with each other. They will answer many questions and undoubtedly raise many more. It should be a fascinating evening.

ROSTER

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Northern California Bird Box

(510) 524-5592

5 species of loon have been seen in California

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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